



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

HEINRICH HEINE'S MUSICAL FEUILLETONS

By O. G. SONNECK

"Er war Musiker als Dichter."—Franz Liszt

AS a musician, I have a sentimental regret that Heinrich Heine did not write the book on witchcraft he had planned. How fascinating a book it would have been, one may surmise from the "Notes" to his scenario of a fantastic "Doctor Faust" ballet, submitted to Lumley of Covent Garden in 1847, from his essay "Elementargeister" and from other of his writings. A mere depositary of his extensive reading on the subject of witchcraft and kindred superstitions, the book certainly would not have been, for Heine's interest in these subjects derived originally from an intimate personal acquaintance with a witch, recognized as such by her credulous clientèle and, after the fashion of witches, by herself.

In his "Memoirs" Heine has narrated some of the weird practices of this particular witch whose confidence he had gained and whose house he frequented until he was sixteen years of age or even older. If one asks, why Heine developed this taste in things dark and tabu, the answer is *cherchez la fille*. He took a passionate liking—perhaps it was the first of his rather numerous love-affairs—to the witch's niece, whose strange beauty the poet vividly described in his "Memoirs"—"das rote Seffchen," as she is known in Heine literature. It was this red-haired Joseffa who kindled, as the poet admits, at least two of his life-long passions: the one for women, the other for poetry, the third being that for the French Revolution.

This strange creature, the daughter of an executioner who was apparently the chief of the executioners' union, had a rich repertoire of German folk-songs, particularly of those current in her outcast circles. She attuned the budding poet's ear to what is characteristically of the folk and to its taste in modes of expression, imagery and cadence in folk-poetry. With his genius, "Harry" Heine was quick to seize his opportunity and, consciously or not, to impart to so many of his own poems in the "Buch der Lieder," even to the later and often less mortal poems of his "elegiac-cynical" period, as he called it, that folk-flavor which captivated

the German nation, because it mirrored what is deepest in every people's soul.

Now, folk-poetry without folk-music of some kind has never had a separate existence, except in the notions of philologists. "Das rote Seffchen" did not *recite* folk-songs to her young lover; she *sang* them. And he in turn, when his passion for poetry had taken fire from his passion for the "ewig-weibliche," could not but fashion such of his own poems as were kin to folk-poems in such wise as to make them cry out for music. In that respect much of Heine's poetry is different from equally great lyric poetry by other poets. Theirs has little or no contact with lyrical folk-poetry, as have on the contrary, for instance, Heine's "Lorelei" or "Es fiel ein Reif in der Frühlingsnacht" (a real folk-song), and indeed requires a composer so little that it is often sheer impudence and a sign of poor taste to graft music on its self-sufficient beauty. However, precisely because of its inherently musical quality, Heine's poetry became the habitat of composers without number. He is of all poets, Goethe not excluded, the "most composed." His lovely "Du bist wie eine Blume" easily holds the record in that respect. Hundreds and hundreds of mostly abortive settings have been published; of course, a mere fraction of the settings actually perpetrated. To this very day, the procession continues, as those know who are unfortunate enough to hold the position of a publisher's manuscript reader. And for this calamity, this parasitic pest, this degradation of both the arts of poetry and music, we have to thank in the last analysis Heinrich Heine's interest in the bewitching niece of an ugly old hag, but we also have to thank her for some priceless gems of poetry inlaid in equally priceless music.

One would imagine that this composers' poet had been passionately fond of music, too. I doubt it. Heine, as the reader will see, wrote entertainingly and brilliantly of musical happenings and personalities. A man of Heine's cultured and keen mind who is thrown into frequent contact with such musicians as Liszt, Chopin, Berlioz, Meyerbeer, Paganini, Rossini, Hiller, Mendelssohn, Wagner, either directly or in the salons where music formed a topic of sprightly conversation, is not likely to write nonsense about music as such, though—as Hiller tells us—he may have been ignorant of the technical distinction between "Generalbass" and "Contrabass." On the other hand, spontaneous love and critical appreciation of an art are not the same and do not always travel together. In this connection it has always perplexed me that with the many allusions to music

in Heine's poetry, and its hospitality to musical trespassers, I cannot recall in it a single soul-stirring tribute to the powers of music or even a really tender confession of love for music as such. Heine was the musician's poet, and, to quote Liszt's fine *mot*, "he was a musician as poet," but he is not music's poet in the sense that Shakespeare is. His youthful poem "Ich denke noch der Zaubervollen" is a personal tribute to Karoline Stern, the first of several prima donnas to tax his poetic emotions, and proves nothing. If I be reminded of the lines:

Wunderbare Macht der Töne!
Zauberklänge sonder Gleichen!
Sie erschüttern selbst den Himmel,
Und die Sterne dort erbleichen!

Wonderful the pow'r of tones is!
Magic sounds beyond comparing!
Lo, they shake the very heavens,
Pallid stars their might declaring.¹

What of them? They are, indeed, by Heine, but they appear in his poem "Mimi" and that poem is a parodistic poem on a concert of cats, in which for the sake of a rime on "jetzo" Heine perpetrated the historical blunder of "Fugen wie von Bach oder Guido von Arezzo." (By the way, Mr. Carl van Vechten will never be forgiven by his "Feathers" for not having quoted that poem in his *jeu d'esprit* "The Cat in Music" and for his silence on Heine's other cat-poem "Jung-Katerverein für Poësie-Musik.")

Whatever music Heine had in his soul, he inherited from his mother, though that must have been a somewhat complicated process of inoculation, for not only did his own father frown on such "idle non-essentials" as music lessons, but her father, too, held the same opinion. However, women will have their ways in such matters, and since she had enjoyed a musical education, more or less behind the back of her father, she decided that her children were to do likewise, more or less behind the back of their father. Possibly because the sound of singing and piano playing literally got on young Harry's nerves, an excellent violin teacher was engaged, evidently without much consideration for the nerves of neighbors. Why the violin lessons did not last many months, Heine's biographer Karpeles has told us in an amusing anecdote the point of which is this: his mother's ears

¹The brilliant translations of Heine's poems quoted in this article are by Mr. Frederick H. Martens, as are the translations of Heine's feuilletons. The text connecting the latter is also by Mr. Martens.—*Ed.*

partook with pride of the amazing progress her violinistic prodigy made, but it so happened that one fine day when she unexpectedly entered the music-room she saw the violin teacher walking up and down fiddling to his heart's content and her ingenious son stretched out on the couch meditatively engaged in the pursuit of poetic happiness! That was not a very auspicious beginning for a musical career, not even of a musical critic, unless one wishes to be facetious at the expense of an honorable calling which Richard Wagner once called immoral. Yet there is no psychological mystery about Heine's invasion of that domain at the rather early age of about twenty-two. Nature had predestined him to be a journalist, and a journalist he became. Not of the modern type that specializes in politics, or music, or divorce-scandals or golf, but of the older, one might say, polyhistoric type. The "Correspondent" stationed in such cultured centres as Paris, Berlin, London, was supposed to regale the folks-back-home with journalistic news and essays from new pastry to politics. Quite naturally women's fashions, pictures, plays, concerts, opera, etc., formed part of the ensemble in these worthy efforts. Numerous members of the journalistic clan gifted with the sense of news had studied jurisprudence, history, philosophy just as assiduously at university as Heinrich Heine, together with other matters that demand less application and yield more pleasure, the total sum of knowledge thus acquired forming the requisite journalistic capital. There was but one slight difference between most of his confrères and Heine; he possessed genius as a writer and they did not.

Precisely for that reason time has not impaired either the charm or milieu-value of Heinrich Heine's musical feuilletons. Excerpts therefrom have appeared occasionally in musical magazines and a copious selection was translated by Claude Aveling for the *Monthly Musical Record* in 1906 and subsequent years, but in their entirety they have not been published hitherto in a musical magazine, unless I am very much mistaken, for the benefit of those who are not likely to hunt for them through the bulky volumes of Heine's collected writings. A sufficient justification for assembling them (with a few insignificant omissions) in *THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY*. As I hope, for the delectation of its readers and not without benefit to those whose business it is to dig up the past—for museum purposes. And yet an apology is in order. Not so much to the reader, as to the poet: his German is so multi-colored, it travels on such light wings and is so sensitive to wit and witticisms (not to forget his naughty *double-entendres*) that no translation can possibly bring out the variety of its aroma.

Nor are the style and atmosphere of these writings of our more sober age. To vibrate sympathetically with them, it will be well to remember Karpeles' keen remark, that "Heinrich Heine was a Jew, born in the days of budding romanticism in a city on the Rhine."

In the heavens of Heine's musical star-gazing, many a name appears that is now extinct; so much so indeed, that a ponderous astronomical apparatus of foot-notes would not restore even a semblance of life to them. They are merely interesting as moons in musical history; but they lend to it at least the romanticism of fossilization. The planets in Heine's stellar system, Weber, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Rossini, Berlioz, Chopin, Bellini, Paganini, while a little more distant from us than from Heine's contemporaries, move about in our musical world very much as they did in his. Spontini looms up in these feuilletons as a kind of fixed star midway between Weber and Meyerbeer. His *idées fixes* and personal eccentricity assisted Wagner, as they did Heine, in making his important position in the history of music at least a novelistic memory for posterity. As for Meyerbeer, the cooling-off process has set in rather rapidly of late years, but in those days he was still the news-giving glorious sun, and Heine, as musical raconteur, merely reflects the logic of his times if in his feuilletons Meyerbeer shines as the main force of attraction. Not, of course, as early as 1822, when Heine first began to write about music in his "Letters from Berlin," merely mentioning Meyerbeer in passing in a passage not important enough for quotation here, but from 1832 on, when Meyerbeer's musical empire had become definitely established.

This introduction is not extended as a *quasi*-thesis for a doctor's degree on the problem of "Heine and Music." If it were, the relations between Heine and Meyerbeer would require a much more searching analysis than hitherto accorded in literature. That is, in my opinion, still an open subject for critical and exhaustive treatment, as is, indeed, the more general subject of "Heine and Music." Here, only an outline can be attempted for the reader's orientation.

It will be noticed that Heine, with less caustic wit than was his wont, refers to Meyerbeer's proverbial habit of self-advertisement. This habit of systematic, "business-like" propaganda for his works, to put it mildly, the great Giacomo had formed from the very beginning of his amazing career. No general ever planned his campaigns more carefully than did Meyerbeer the campaigns for the success of his operas. He did not, like Liszt, and in

Liszt's phrase, disdain "to buy recognition on the market." On the contrary, he made that a deliberate practice, but it is also true that Meyerbeer, whether with ulterior motives or not, always held his purse open for fellow-artists in distress. Heine was one of them and Meyerbeer proved his friendship for him on more than one occasion. Especially in that crisis in Heine's life when his cousin stopped the yearly stipend which he had enjoyed from his "indecently" rich uncle Solomon Heine, on the grounds that his father's will contained no provision for the continuation of the stipend. The shocking news of this disaster to his already strained circumstances undoubtedly hastened the ravages of that paralyzing disease which condemned Heine to the terrible, long years of his "Mattress-grave" death. Heine's biographer Strodttmann claims that Meyerbeer offered to pay the poet the stipend out of his own pocket, if the cousin persisted in his refusal. At any rate, Meyerbeer interceded in Heine's behalf and testified to the fact that within his own hearing Heine's uncle had declared the stipend to be intended as a pension for life.

Antisemitic authors like Bartels have accused Heine of almost everything on the calendar of sin, lack of poetic talent included. One need not take such silly fanaticism seriously, but unfortunately a broad yellow streak cannot be denied in Heine's character. His treatment, for instance, of Börne and Count Platen went far beyond the permissible, precisely because a pen like his was mightier than any sword. Liszt, too, in the controversy about St. Simonism, had occasion to smart under Heine's unfairly vitriolic attacks and in more than one of his poems Heine's wit became rather cheap at the expense of Liszt. Nevertheless, Heine was not such a cad as to turn on a benefactor like Meyerbeer without some reason which, if only in his own eyes, justified him in dropping all pretense of courtesy and pouring the acid of his contempt on Meyerbeer as he did after he had (in 1847) ceased to write musical feuilletons.

The Meyerbeeriana in the latter tell only part of the story, the earlier part. For the rest one has to go to Heine's later poems in the marvelous "Romancero," most of them dating from 1847 to 1851, and his "Last poems," from 1853 to 1856, which, by the way, contain poems that, in my humble opinion, excel those of his previous periods. Also to his posthumous "Gedanken und Einfälle," which contain the following aperçus on Meyerbeer.

The eclecticism in (French) music was imported with Meyerbeer.
Meyerbeer is aristocracy's musical maître de plaisir.

Meyerbeer has become entirely Jewish. If he should want to return to Berlin into his former position, he would have to get himself baptized first.

This is very mild in comparison with his contemptuous references to the "Lorbeer-Meyer / Dem grossen Maestro in Berlin" in his poem "Der Wanzerich" or "Meyer-Bär / Der musikalische Millionär" and "Bären-Meyer" in the poem "König Langohr I." Even these cheap plays on Meyerbeer's name are harmless if confronted with these lines from the fragment "Teleologie":

Ohren gab uns Gott die beiden
Um von Mozart, Gluck und Haydn
Meisterstücke anzuhören—
Gäb es nur Tonkunst-Kolik
Und Hämorrhoidal-Musik
Von dem grossen Meyerbeer,
Schon *ein* Ohr hinlänglich wär.

Ears God gave us to betiden
That by Mozart, Gluck and Haydn,
Masterpieces we might hark to—
Were tonal art but colic void,
And music only hemorrhoid,
By the great, great Meyerbeer;
Then with *one* ear we could hear.

Not in such atrocious taste but equally vindictive is the poem, also happily a fragment, "Päan":

Streiche von der Stirn den Lorbeer,
Der zu lang herunterbammelt
Und vernimm mit freiem Ohr, Beer,
Was Dir meine Lippe stammelt.

Ja, nur stammeln, stottern kann ich,
Trete vor den grossen Mann ich,
Dessen hoher Genius
Ist ein wahrer Kunstgenuss,
Dessen Ruhm ein Meisterstück ist,
Und kein Zufall, nicht ein Glück ist,
Das im Schläfe ohne Müh
Manchem kömmt, er weiss nicht wie,
Wie z. B. jenem Rotznas',
Dem Rossini oder Mozart.
Nein, der Meister, der uns theuer,
Unser lieber Beeren-Meyer,
Darf sich rühmen : er erschuf
Selber seines Namens Ruf,
Durch die Macht der Willenskraft,

The Musical Quarterly

Durch des Denkens Wissenschaft,
 Durch politische Gespinste
 Und die feinsten Rechenkünste—
 Und sein König, sein Protektor,
 Hat zum Generaldirektor
 Sämmlicher Musikanstalten
 Ihn ernannt und mit Gewalten
 Ausgerüstet ———
 die ich heute unterthänigst ehrfurchtsvoll
 in Anspruch nehme.

From your brow the laurel now clear,
 That hangs too longly swaying,
 And hear with open ear, Beer,
 What my stamm'ring lips are saying.
 Only stamm'ring, stutt'ring can I
 Step before that great man, aye;
 Whose genius' lofty measure
 Is a real artistic pleasure,
 A masterpiece whose fame is,
 Nor through chance or luck became his.
 Such in sleep no effort showing,
 Comes to some without their knowing,
 To some snot-nose, as we've seen, be
 It Mozart or Rossini.
 Nay, that master, valued higher,
 Our own cherished Beeren-Meyer,
 He may boast; creation claim
 By himself, of his own fame,
 Through his power of will he wrought,
 Through the science strong of thought,
 Through political machination,
 And most artful calculation —
 And his king and his protector
 As the general director
 Of all musical institutions of ours
 Has appointed him with powers
 Equipped. . .

 which I most submissively and
 respectfully claim to-day.

In the poem that follows, the bitter "Die Menge thut es" with its almost clairvoyant prediction of recent events—neither poem hardly intended for publication—Heine again spits venom at his *bête-noire* as the "Musikverderber."

Space and manners forbid to follow Heine further in this direction. However, one poem must be quoted here in full, since it is a clever little *feuilleton* in verse on Meyerbeer's opera "Le Prophète."

FESTGEDICHT

Beeren-Meyer, Meyer-Beer!
 Welch ein Lärm, was ist die Mär'?
 Willst du wirklich jetzt gebären
 Und den Heiland uns bescheren,
 Der verheissen, der versprochen?
 Kommst du wirklich in die Wochen?
 Das ersehnte Meisterstück
 Dreizehnjähriger Kolik,
 Kommt das Schmerzenskind am End',
 Das man „Jan von Leyden“ nennt?

Nein, es ist nicht mehr Erfindung
 Der Journale—die Entbindung
 Ist vollbracht, sie ist geschehen!
 Überstanden sind die Wehen;
 Der verehrte Wöchner liegt
 Mit verklärtem Angesicht
 In dem angstbetheränten Bette!
 Eine warme Serviette
 Legt ihm Gouin auf den Bauch,
 Welcher schlaff wie'n leerer Schlauch.
 Doch die Kindbettzimmerstille
 Unterbricht ein laut Gebrülle
 Plötzlich—es erschmettern hell
 Die Posaunen, Israel
 Ruft mit tausend Stimmen: „Heil!“
 (Unbezahlt zum grössten Teil),
 „Heil dem Meister, der uns teuer,
 Heil dem grossen Beeren-Meyer,
 Heil dem grossen Meyer-Beer!
 Der nach Nöten, lang und schwer,
 Der nach langen, schweren Nöten
 Uns geboren den Propheten!“

Aus dem Jubilantenchor
 Tritt ein junger Mann hervor,
 Der gebürtig ist aus Preussen
 Und Herr Brandus ist geheissen.
 Sehr bescheiden ist die Miene,
 (Ob ihn gleich ein Beduine,
 Ein berühmter Rattenfänger,
 Sein Musikverlagsvorgänger,
 Eingeschult in jeden Rummel),
 Er ergreift eine Trummel,
 Paukt drauf los im Siegesrausche,
 Wie einst Mirjam that, als Mausche
 Eine grosse Schlacht gewann,
 Und er hebt zu singen an :

Genialer Künstlerschweiss
 Hat bedächtig, tropfenweis,
 Im Behälter sich gesammelt,
 Der mit Planken fest verrammelt.
 Nun die Schleusen aufgezo-
 gen, bricht hervor in stolzen Wogen
 Das Gewässer—Gottes Wunder!
 's ist ein grosser Strom jetzunder,
 Ja, ein Strom des ersten Ranges,
 Wie der Euphrat, wie der Ganges,
 Wo an palmigen Gestaden
 Elefantenkälber baden,
 Wie der Rheinstrom bei Schaffhausen,
 Wo Kaskaden schäumen, brausen,
 Und Berliner Studiosen
 Gaffend stehn mit feuchten Hosen,
 Wie die Weichsel, wo da hausen
 Edle Polen, die sich lausen,
 Singend ihre Heldenleiden
 Bei des Ufers Trauerweiden;
 Ja, er ist fast wie ein Meer,
 Wie das rote, wo das Heer
 Pharaonis musst' ersaufen,
 Während wir hindurchgelaufen
 Trocknen Fusses mit der Beute—
 Welche Tiefe, welche Breite!
 Hier auf diesem Erdenglobus
 Gibt's kein bessres Wasser-Opus!
 Es ist hochsublim poetisch,
 Urtitanisch majestätisch,
 Gross wie Gott und die Natur—
 UND ICH HAB' DIE PARTITUR!

EPILOG

(Zum Loblied auf den *celeberrimo maestro Fiascomo*.)

Die Neger berichten: der König der Thiere,
 Der Löwe, wenn er erkrankt ist, kuriere
 Sich dadurch, dass er einen Affen zerreisst
 Und ihn mit Haut und Haar verspeist.

Ich bin kein Löwe, ich bin kein König
 Der Thiere, doch wollt ich erproben ein wenig
 Das Neger-Recept—ich schrieb dies Poem
 Und ich befinde mich besser seitdem.

FESTIVAL POEM¹

Beeren-Meyer, Meyer-Beer,
 What is this noise? What's this we hear?
 Say, will you really now give birth
 Unto a Christ for us on earth?
 Promised and foretold he's been.
 Are you really lying-in?
 Is that yearned-for masterpiece,
 Thirteen colic-years' release,
 Now born at last, that child of woe,
 Whom we as "Jan von Leyden" know?

Nay, it is not the hoax of ev'ry
 Newspaper—for the child's delivery
 Has been accomplished, time's accounted,
 And the birth-pangs are surmounted.
 The lier-in esteemed is resting,
 His mien transfigured joy attesting,
 Upon his couch with tears all wet.
 And a well-warmed serviette
 Does Gouin² o'er his belly drag
 Now slack as any empty bag.
 But the confinement-room's still calm
 Is shattered by a loud alarm,
 Suddenly—there's a blaring swell
 Of trumpets, and all Israel
 Cries with a thousand voices "Hail!"
 (Most all unpaid this cry exhale)
 "Hail the master we admire!
 Hail the mighty Beeren-Meyer!
 Hail the mighty Meyer-Beer,
 Who in labor, long, severe,
 Who in labor, long, arduous,
 Has a prophet born unto us!"

From the jubilating chorus
 One young man steps out before us,
 Who in Prussia saw the daylight,
 Yclept Brandus,³ if they say right.
 Very modest is his mien.
 (Did, as does the Bedouin,
 Some rat-catcher fame-possessor,
 Music-publishing predecessor⁴
 Drill him till he's up to snuff?)

¹There had been a great deal of fuss made for years over Meyerbeer's "Le Prophète," before the work was completed and produced.

²Meyerbeer's friend.

³The music publisher.

⁴Maurice Schlesinger.

The Musical Quarterly

He picks a drum up—that's the stuff!—
 And thumps away with triumph rosy
 As Miriam on a time when Mosey
 Had won a battle, conquering;
 And then he starts right in to sing:

"Genial sweat of artistry,
 Drop by drop, judiciously,
 In its reservoir collected,
 By strong planks from escape protected,
 Now the sluice-gates raised, it flows,
 In proud waves bursting forth, it goes,
 The flood-tide—Wondrous! God the giver!
 Lo, it is a mighty river!
 Yes, a stream that quite as great is
 As the Ganges or Euphrates,
 Where on banks where palms are waving
 Elephant-calves go a-bathing;
 As the Rhine, Schaffhausen leaving,
 Roars and foams its cascades weaving;
 And the Berlin students, staring,
 Stand their moistened trousers wearing;
 Like Vistula, its shores housing
 Noble Poles, themselves delousing,
 Whose song their hero-suff'ring staunches
 Beneath the weeping-willow branches;
 Aye, 'tis almost like a sea,
 Like the Red, where wretchedly
 Pharoah and his host were drowned,
 While we skipped through safe and sound,
 Passing dry-shod with our plunder
 Depth and breadth, O what a wonder!
 Here upon this mundane globus
 There's no better water-opus.
 Like God and Nature! great—what's more
 I HAVE GOT THE VOCAL SCORE!"

EPILOGUE

(To the Song of Praise upon the *celeberrimo maestro Fiascomo*.)

The king of the beasts, runs the negroes' narrating,
 The lion, when ill, cures himself without waiting
 By seizing an ape, whom to pieces he tears,
 And swallowing the simian with hide and with hairs.

I am no lion, no ruler royal
 Of beasts, yet I wanted to give it a trial
 That recipe negroid—so this poem inditing—
 I'm feeling much better since then for its writing.

¹"God and Nature," a youthful work of Meyerbeer's.

This epilogue will convince even the most charitably inclined that Heine's poetic insults to Meyerbeer were "inspired" by animosity more than by moral disgust with Meyerbeer's methods, so deliciously summed up in Heine's poem "Ruhelechzend" in the untranslatable word "Weltberühmtheitsklacke."

No amount of whitewashing can obscure the lamentable truth. Wirth and other writers may wax eloquent over the essential purity of Heine's character; they may explain away much by Heine's desire to provide for his wife, by his poverty and by his heavy debts. We very cheerfully join them in giving Heine the benefit of the doubt wherever possible, yet the plain fact remains that there was, as Mr. Calvocoressi aptly put it a few years ago in the *Musical Times* in his article "Heine and some musicians"—"a blot on the escutcheon."

One wonders what Franz Liszt thought, when he read Heine's lengthy but unconvincing defense of himself for having accepted for years a gratuity from the French government, officially as a distinguished foreign guest of the French nation, in reality as a maxim-silencer: a bribe remains a bribe whether one be paid to say pleasant things or not to say unpleasant things. Liszt and Heine broke in 1844 and soon Heine became vindictive. The real reason, as has been pointed out by Chantavoine, was not revealed until many years later by Liszt to Lina Ramann, his biographer: he never "enjoyed the extortion of funds" by Heine. The final break came when Heine in 1844 wrote a letter to Liszt (published in 1895 by La Mara in her collection of "Letters of famous contemporaries to Liszt") in which Heine informed his "friend" that an article written by him contained things which might not please Liszt, that he should like to see him to talk matters over, etc. Coming on top of an attempt to borrow several thousand francs from Liszt, this gentle hint at blackmail did not have the desired result, as Heine might have foreseen had he known Liszt better. This episode in the relations between Liszt and Heine even in the absence of incriminating documents would have gone far to explain to a psychologist the motives which prompted Heine in turning suddenly so savagely on Meyerbeer, after the fulsome journalistic praise of his "Friend," much of which, of course, was sincere and entirely justified by Meyerbeer's historical position. The diagnosis would have been that Heine was apt to turn on a friend, if he asked for money and did not receive it.

It also happens that in my university days a grandson of Meyerbeer told me of the existence of material in the archives

of the Meyerbeer family which would be likely to present to the world a more truthful portrait of Meyerbeer than apparently readers (and therefore the critics) of musical literature had thitherto insisted on and would vindicate his grandfather. Just how Meyerbeer's vindication could be effected unless it could be proved that the maestro had not made temptation easy for indigent journalists to weigh the merit of his operas on a scale of gold, was not quite clear. However, sundry sensational revelations were expected from the secret *dossier* of letters, etc., especially as the will of Meyerbeer was supposed to have forbidden its publication until fifty years after his death. He died in 1864, and those Meyerbeeriana do not as yet seem to have seen the light of day, but—as a sort of preliminary shock—the second-hand dealer Henrici of Berlin in 1912 offered for sale, without disclosing their provenience, some letters written by Heine to Meyerbeer between 1835 and 1845. Henrici knew his business well enough to whet the appetite of the morbidly curious by reducing the quotations from these letters in his catalogue to a minimum. When in the following year (December, 1913 and January, 1914) Friedrich Wirth published them in their entirety in an article for the magazine "Der Greif" under the title of "Heine and Meyerbeer, mit ungedruckten Briefen," he argued that Henrici's excerpts had created an impression unjustly detrimental to Heine's reputation.

In coming to the rescue of Heine, Prof. Wirth's tactics are rather naïve. He tries hard to whitewash Heine by flinging mud at Meyerbeer and even at Heine's wife for her extravagance. He maintains that both Heine and Meyerbeer had to make common cause against the gang of journalistic grafters with whom Paris was then infested, and especially to protect themselves by the application of gold against the "fleas," as Heine called them, poured into France by Germany. Says Wirth:

Meyerbeer was rich and gladly spent money for the purchase of journalistic favors. That they had to be purchased, was not the fault of Heine. And to purchase them, was in those days a necessity. We know [do we?] that Liszt procured for himself in a similar manner favorable press comments and that Meyerbeer bought up insignificant journalists (like Johann Peter Lyser, as I have proved) for such small sums as 20 florins—And since Heine untiringly worked for Meyerbeer's glory in newspaper offices, he considered himself entitled to the equivalent in money, not taken as presents, as did his journalistic colleagues, but as loans. To expect him to have labored without compensation, would be unfair.

Such specious arguments leave an even worse taste in one's mouth, than Heine's misdeeds. Granting that he, with his

barbed-wire pen, put himself at the easy mercy of journalistic blackmailers, that his venture to found a German newspaper in Paris and other circumstances ruined him financially, that he needed money badly, granting all this and more, there is really little difference between accepting a money present and a money loan—if one does not pay it back. Nor does it seem to have occurred to Mr. Wirth that possibly it was Heine's plain duty as a critic to slay Meyerbeer's enemies *gratis* and to praise his friend's operas, if he believed in them, without the stimulant of loans. In watching the coöperative game played by this *par nobile fratrum* one is reminded of jolly Demokritos-Weber's "one hand washes the other and in the process both become dirty." Of course, for a friend to borrow money from a friend is in itself one of the most natural things in the world, but when these borrowings are linked, as appears from Heine's letters, with services rendered or to be rendered, then the matter becomes just a little malodorous. For instance, the reader will be amused by Heine's ridicule of Spontini, but if he knows that Spontini and Meyerbeer were bitter enemies, and in a sense rivals, and that Heine in one of the letters to his friend and "backer" Meyerbeer formulates his plan of attack on Spontini with great glee, then the reader will very properly draw his own conclusions.

The first of the nine letters is dated April 6, 1835, the last Dec. 24, 1845. Money is practically the leit-motiv in all of them. Just when Heine began his "borrowings" from Meyerbeer is not quite clear, but it must have been between the year 1827 when the two became acquainted and the letter of April 6, 1835, in which Heine writes that again his pockets had been completely emptied by the "fleas" and that since his and Meyerbeer's troubles were intertwined, he must *again demand* money from him—500 francs, which seems to have been Heine's standardized figure.

The break between these two men of genius came in 1845. It appears that either late in 1843 or early in 1844 Heine conceived the brilliant idea that the publication of songs by Giacomo Meyerbeer to some poems in the popular vein by Heinrich Heine would be a profitable affair. Meyerbeer apparently accepted the suggestion, but, slow worker that he was or because of some other reason he did not compose the poems. However, on the strength of Meyerbeer's promise, Heine forthwith drew from Escudier, the publisher, advance royalties amounting to 1000 francs. Then, when Meyerbeer failed to send the music, Heine used that fact as a pretext for borrowing some more money from Meyerbeer. When the latter reacted negatively, Heine ostensibly fell back on

Meyerbeer's default in delivering the promised music, as a ground for "taking leave" from Meyerbeer. That this was a mere bluff, even Wirth concedes, but Meyerbeer, who was not a novice in this game of journalistic poker, called the bluff. While holding out a friendly hand to Heine, the hand remained empty. The breach was not healed, and could not be healed after 1849, when Heine wrote his "Festgedicht." This "Poem" soon found its way into a Hamburg sheet that fed on that type of diatribe (significantly called "Der Freischütz") and promptly was called to Meyerbeer's attention. In his desperate desire to whitewash Heine, Mr. Wirth remarks that the publication of the "Festgedicht" was due to an indiscretion and not attributable to Heine, but a few lines further on he makes the terribly damaging statement that Heine himself had vainly tried to have the poem published in the "Allgemeine Zeitung"! He further tells us that Heine became furious when Meyerbeer remained deaf to his demand for participation in the royalties on a ballet "Sakuntala" by Taglioni, staged in Berlin, under the pretext that it was based on his own ill-fated "Faust" ballet-scenario. And worse than this, he informs us that Heine in a letter to a friend wrote that it was about time to "castigate" Meyerbeer, and that in a letter to his friend Kolb of April 17, 1849, one day after the première of Meyerbeer's "Le Prophète," Heine sneeringly referred to the opera as a "miserable opus" on which "streams of gold had been spent for publicity purposes." In the face of all this, the musical world is expected by Mr. Wirth to believe that Meyerbeer's refusal further to lend money to Heine had nothing to do with the poet's radical change of mind towards Meyerbeer's merits as a composer: allowing for the poet's disappointment over the Escudier and Sakuntala episodes, his apostacy is put on purely esthetic grounds. That Heine was privileged to change his mind about Meyerbeer's music after 1845 no one will deny; nor that he was privileged to worship at Meyerbeer's temple of music with more esthetic convictions than in the temples of other composers. What lifts the matter suspiciously out of the pure regions of esthetics is precisely the fact that Heine never wrote anything really derogatory about Meyerbeer until his chances for borrowing money from him had definitely disappeared, and that his eulogies of Meyerbeer at the expense of others coincided with the years during which the poet, in plain English, behaved and acted very much like the other "fleas."

Inasmuch as Mr. Wirth is of a different opinion and reaches the *quod erat demonstrandum* that "the publication (of the letters)

in their entirety will surely prove that they cannot cause us to call Heine simply an extortionist and venal critic," the following letters will serve the purpose of indicating the direction in which the historical truth lies:

Paris, May 13th, 1844.

What I have to write you, great maestro, I know full well; but how I shall write you to-day, I do not yet know. For my eyes are again in a sad condition. I can hardly distinguish the letters which I am jotting down and, to make things worse, my mind is clouded at present by a terrible ill-humor. For the latter you are somewhat to be blamed; indeed I attribute it wholly to you. You have shown me too much love and friendship that I could be seriously enraged at you, but the manner in which you deserted me with reference to the songs is, I confess, unpardonable. The more so, since you knew very well, that I was losing thereby every three weeks 200 francs, a sum on which I counted. This deficit has placed me in a position of extreme want.

In the beginning, and in order to keep me temporarily quiet, you instructed Gouin¹ to pay me 200 francs. However small this sum was, I accepted it because I have the principle never to refuse money, be it ever so little. (How badly the people know me who denounce me as a man without principles!) Gouin kept me off with the promise of a letter from you. I waited and waited and growled and, to get even with you, I recently went to the Huguenots to hear Mr. Mengis. I forbade my wife to applaud; I told her how abominably Meyerbeer treats me and how it was his fault that I could not yet buy her a new dress—but she need not hiss just for that.

The greater vengeance comes to-day. If ever you deserved sacking and looting, it will be to-day. My eyes demand that I betake myself to some resort and I am obliged to ask you to fortify my consumptive pocket-book with 500 francs. After you have sent me the tunes, I shall restore to you the money, but in the meantime you must send me the 500 francs as soon as possible, indeed immediately, because I should not be writing to you for the money if I did not need it badly. Also, I know that you would help me gladly in this manner, even if I were not so fully entitled to help as I am to-day. I believe certainly that I shall pay you back the money, after I have received the tunes.—If I consider that your tardiness, not counting my trip, costs me about 2000 francs, I reconcile myself with the necessity of writing you to-day.²

Paris, December 24th, 1845.

Highly esteemed Maestro!

To be candid, I cannot bear even to have asked you in vain for a thing. I shall, therefore, now have to take leave of you.

In parting from you, I feel compelled, for my own satisfaction, to let you know that you have not the slightest idea of what great value it

¹A French financier and devoted friend of Meyerbeer.—*Ed.*

²The rest of the letter is foreign to the subject.—*Ed.*

was to you and others that I kept my post here in Paris for fifteen years, in spite of the sacrifices of money and health which this feverish and costly place imposed on me. As to the Volkslieder-melodies, I relieve you of your promise. For years you have led me by the nose like a fool; I now desire to have nothing to do with that publication. I have informed Messrs. Escudier to that effect and have returned to them the advance royalty of 1000 francs. Perhaps I shall hand back to you one of these days the 500 francs, with which you recently claimed to have "bought in" your promise;¹—I prefer to relieve you gratis of that obligation. Nor can I keep from you how I realize now that, though you are a genius in music, it is in that respect only that I can admire and respect you.

HEINRICH HEINE.

The sketch of Meyerbeer's answer reads:

Dearest Heine!

Your letter has deeply wounded me. After my having shown you for many years, whenever you so desired,—charitable proofs of my friendship and attachment, you write me such a bitter letter, because the present condition of my finances does not permit me to accede this time to your wishes. I should feel still more pained, did I not believe that perhaps your present ill-health has thrown dark and irritating shadows over your moral mood and that therefore your letter is but the result of a temporary physical indisposition.

However, I, for my part, cannot cease so easily to be the friend of my friends, even though the latter may set the example. Hence, in the future as in the past, you will always find in me the warm admirer of your great genius and the loyal devoted friend.

Your sincerely devoted
M.

Heine's genius as a poet and feuilletonist is not impaired by such letters or by his poetic vivisection of Meyerbeer after they had parted company. Nor does Heine's itching palm affect those sides of his character, which will ever remain admirable. Even if it did, this would not be the place to argue the point. Here Heine's weaknesses are of interest and importance only for their bearing on the tone and substance of his musical feuilletons. These are entertaining enough in themselves, but they afford additional enjoyment if one has shadowed Heinrich Heine behind the scenes and there beholds him in the act of moving his puppets on wires of gold with as much malice of afterthought as of forethought.

¹Apparently this was either the sum asked for by Heine in the other letter or a subsequent loan.—*Ed.*

THE FEUILLETONS

THE BERLIN LETTERS

(1822)

It is with his first "Letter from Berlin" (Jan. 20, 1822) that Heine's musical feuilletons may be said to begin. Here he mentions Alexandre-Jean Boucher, soloist to King Charles IV of Spain, that executive violin virtuoso who called himself "the Alexander of the violin," and whose concert tours took him to Holland, Germany and England. Says Heine:

Boucher really has a striking resemblance to the Emperor Napoleon. He calls himself a cosmopolite, the Socrates among violinists, rakes together an insane amount of money, and in his gratitude calls Berlin the *capitale de la musique*. Yet let us hasten quickly by; here is another confectioner's shop, and there lives Lebeufve, a name which magnetizes. Look at the handsome buildings which line both sides of the *Linden*! This is where the most aristocratic circles of Berlin reside. But let us hurry on! The great building to the left is the Fuchs confectionary. Everything in it is beautifully decorated: there are mirrors, flowers, marzipan figurines, gilding everywhere, in short, everything breathes the most exceptional elegance. Yet all that one eats there is of the worst and most expensive in Berlin. There is little choice as regards the confectionary and most of it is stale. A couple of musty old magazines lie on the table, and the tall young lady who waits on us is not even pretty. We will not go to Fuchs'. I eat no mirrors and silk curtains, and when I wish to see something worth looking at, I go to Spontini's "Cortez" or "Olympia."

In his second letter (March 16, of the same year), Heine again reverts to Boucher, and then passes to other details of musical life in Berlin.

Boucher, who has long since given his very—very—very last concert, and is now, perhaps, enchanting Warsaw or St. Petersburg with his conjurer's tricks on the violin, is quite in the right when he calls Berlin *la capitale de la musique*. All winter long there has been so great a singing and sounding here that one could scarcely hear or see. One concert trod upon the heels of another.

Wer nennt die Fiedler, nennt die Namen,
Die gastlich hier zusammenkamen?

. . .

Selbst von Hispanien kamen sie
Und spielten auf dem Schaugerüste
Gar manche schlechte Melodie.

(Who'll name the fiddlers, one and 'tother
Who here as guests met one another?

. . .

From Spain itself they took their way,
And on the concert platform they
Full many a wretched tune did play.)

The Spaniard was Escudero, a pupil of Baillot, a good violinist, young, blooming, handsome, and yet no *protégé* of the ladies. An ominous rumor preceded him, to the effect that the Italian knife had made him impotent to endanger the fair sex. I will not weary you with recounting all the musical evening conversations which delighted and bored us this winter. I shall only mention that the Seidler's concert was attended to excess, and that we are filled with expectation of Drouet's concert, because young Mendelssohn is going to play in it for the first time.

Have you not yet heard Maria von Weber's 'Freischütz'? No? Unfortunate man! But have you not at least heard the "Song of the Bridesmaids," called 'Bridal Wreath' for short, from this opera? No? Fortunate man!

If you go from the Halle to the Oranienburg Gate, and from the Brandenburg Gate to the Königsthor, yes, if you even go from the Unterbaum to the Köpnicker Gate, you will forever and eternally hear the same melody, the song of songs, the 'Bridal Wreath'!

As in Goethe's "Elegies" we see the poor Englishman pursued in every land by the strains of *Marlborough s'en va't-en guerre*, so I am hounded from early morn until late at night by the song:

Wir winden dir den Jungfernkranz
Mit veilchenblauer Seide;
Wir führen dich zu Spiel und Tanz,
Zu Lust und Hochzeitfreude.

Chor:

Schöner, schöner, schöner grüner Jungfernkranz
Mit veilchenblauer Seide, mit veilchenblauer Seide!

Lavendel, Myrt' und Thymian
Das wächst in meinem Garten.
Wie lange bleibt der Freiersmann?
Ich kann ihn kaum erwarten!

Chor:

Schöner, schöner, schöner u.s.w.

(The bridal wreath for thee we bind,
With silken thread of azure,
In wedded days may'st thou find
Full store of hope and pleasure.

Chorus:

Bridal garland, flowers white and leaves of green,
Silken thread of azure, may their life be pleasure!

I've planted thyme and myrtle sweet
 They all have bloom'd and faded;
 But when shall I my true love meet?
 How long will he delay yet?

Chorus:

Bridal garland, flowers white and leaves of green, etc.)

Though I may be in the best of humor when I rise, all my cheerfulness is dashed at once when the very school children who go by my window early in the morning twitter the 'Bridal Wreath.' No more than an hour passes, and the landlady's daughter gets up with her 'Bridal Wreath.' I hear my barber singing the 'Bridal Wreath' on his way upstairs. The little girl who does the wash comes along 'with thyme and myrtle sweet.' And so it goes on. My head rings. I cannot stand it, hurry from the house and in a rage fling myself into a cab. It is well that I can hear no song through the rattling of the wheels. I get out at B. . . . 's. May I see Miss B. . . . ? The servant hurries. Yes! The doors open. There sits the charmer at the piano and receives me with:

But when shall I my true love meet?
 How long will he delay yet?

You sing like an angel, I cry with spasmodic friendliness. "I'll begin again at the beginning," lisps her ladyship, and once more she binds her "Bridal Wreath" and binds and binds until I myself begin to tie myself into knots like a worm in my unspeakable torture; until in terror of soul I cry out: 'Help, Samiel!'

That, you must know, is the name of the evil one in the "Freischütz"; Caspar the huntsman, who has sold himself to him, whenever he is hard pressed cries: 'Help, Samiel!' It became the style here to make use of the expression when humorously embarrassed, and Boucher, who terms himself the Socrates of the violin, even called out loudly 'Help, Samiel!' in a concert, when one of his strings snapped.

And Samiel helps. The disconcerted donna suddenly ceases her binding song and lisps: "What is the matter with you?" "Nothing but pure delight," I gasp with a forced smile. "You are ill," says she, "go to the Thiergarten, enjoy the fine weather and look at the fine folk." I seize hat and cane, kiss her ladyship's gracious hand, cast one last lingering look of passion in her direction, dart out of the door, once more climb into the first cab I can find, and roll to the Brandenburg Gate. I get out and run into the Thiergarten.

I advise you, should you get out once in a while, not to miss the opportunity one of these fine early spring days, of going to the Thiergarten at about this time, say half-past one. Go in at the left, and hasten to the spot where our Louise of blessed memory has been honored with a small, simple monument by the female indwellers of the Thiergarten. Our king makes a habit of walking there. He is a handsome, noble and imposing figure, disdaining all outward pomp. He almost invariably wears a modest grey mantle, and I managed to make a simpleton believe that the king was often obliged to put up with such clothes

because the master of his wardrobe did not live in Prussia, and seldom came to Berlin. At this time the king's handsome children may also be seen in the Thiergarten, as well as the entire court and the noblest among the nobility. The alien faces are those belonging to the families of foreign ambassadors. One or two lackeys in livery follow the distinguished ladies at a short distance. Officers gallop by on the most beautiful horses. I have seldom seen handsomer horses than here in Berlin. I delight my eyes with the sight of these splendid equestrian figures. The princes of our royal house are among them. What a strong and handsome family of princes! No deformed or wasted branch is put forth from this stem! With joyous vitality, courage and distinction reflected in their faces, the king's two older sons ride by. Yonder handsome, youthful figure, with a good face and eyes full of loving kindness, is the king's third son, Prince Karl. But that radiant, majestic woman, who flies by on a tall horse with a shining, colorful suite, that is our—Alexandrine! In a close-fitting riding habit of brown, a round hat with feathers on her head, and a riding-whip in her hand, she resembles one of those knightly female figures which shine forth so charmingly in the magic mirror of olden fairytale, and whom we never know whether to regard as holy images or Amazons. I believe the sight of these innocent features has made me a better man; shivers of devotion set me trembling; I hear angel voices; invisible palms of peace wave, a great hymn rises in my soul—and then there is a sudden sound of rattling harp-strings, and the voice of an old woman squeaking the: 'Bridal wreath for thee we bind!'

And now the accursed song accompanies me all day long. It embitters my happiest moments. Even when I sit down to eat, it is doodled out for me by the singer Heinsius in the guise of dessert. It chokes me all the afternoon. On one side a lame man is playing the 'Bridal Wreath' on a barrel-organ; on the other a blind man is scraping it out on his fiddle. At evening it begins to haunt one in earnest. We have a fluting and a bawling, a fistulating and a gurgling, and always the same old tune. As a change, 'Caspar's Song' and the 'Hunters' Chorus' is now and again bellowed into the general hum by some illuminated student or ensign, but the 'Bridal Wreath' is permanent; when one has ended it another begins it again from the beginning; it sounds forth at me from every house; everyone whistles it with original variations; yes, I even believe the dogs in the street bark it.

At evening, like a fallow deer which has been hounded to death, I lay my head in the lap of the loveliest of Borussian girls; tenderly she strokes my bristly hair, and lips into my ear: "I love youse, and your Luweezer will always never leave off bein' kind to thee!" and she strokes and pets me until she thinks that I am about to fall asleep, and then she softly takes up her 'Catharre' (guitar) and sings me the 'Cravatte' (the cavatina) from "Tancred": 'After my sorrows,' and I take my rest after *my* many sorrows, and tender pictures and dreams flutter round me—when I am once more torn forcibly from my slumbers, and the wretched creature sings: 'The bridal wreath for thee we bind . . . !'

In mad despair I tear myself from the most delightful of embraces, hurry down the narrow stairs, rush home like the storm-wind, and fling myself into bed gnashing my teeth, still hearing the old cook tottering

about the kitchen with her 'Bridal Wreath,' as I bury myself even deeper in the covers.

Now you will realize, dear reader, why I call you a fortunate man, if you have not as yet heard this song. But do not believe that the melody is a poor one on that account. On the contrary, it is its very excellence which has made it so popular. But *toujours perdrix*. . . You understand!

The whole "Freischütz" is admirable, and certainly deserves the interest with which it has already been received all over Germany. It has been given here for the thirtieth time, perhaps, and it is still surprisingly difficult to obtain good tickets for a performance. It is causing a furore in Vienna, Dresden and Hamburg as well. This shows conclusively that it was wrong to think this opera was only exalted here owing to the efforts of an anti-Spontini party. I see that the expression is strange to you. Do not mistake it for a political one. The violent party struggles of Liberals and Ultras, as we may observe them in other capitals, do not break out here, because the royal power, powerfully and without prejudice, stands between them as a mediator. On the other hand, in Berlin we may often see a far more entertaining struggle of factions, those of music. Had you been there toward the close of last summer, you might have witnessed by personal observation what the battle between Gluckists and Piccinists once must have been like in Paris. But I see that I must now discuss the local opera a little more in detail; first, because, after all, it is a prime subject of conversation in Berlin; and secondly, because you will be unable to grasp the spirit of many of my notes without the following observations. Of our singers, male and female, I shall not speak here. Their apologetics are stereotype, and may be found in all the Berlin correspondents' articles and newspaper criticisms: one reads every day that Milder-Hauptmann is unsurpassable, Schultz surpassing and Seidler superb. Enough, it is uncontrovertible that opera has been raised to an astonishing level of art in this place, and that our opera is second to none in Germany. Whether this is due to the industrious activity of the late Weber, or whether Sir Gasparo Spontini, according to the claim made by his followers, called all these wonders forth with one wave of his magic wand, I venture to doubt greatly. I even venture to believe that the management of the famous knight has been most disadvantageous as regards some sections of the Opera. And I insist that since the complete separation of the Opera from the playhouse, and Spontini's uncontrolled rule of the former, it must suffer ever increasing injury, day by day, owing to the great knight's natural preference for his own great productions, and the productions of geniuses akin to or him or of friends of his, as well as because of his dislike, also quite natural, for the music of those composers whose genius does not appeal to him or does not pay homage to his, or—*horrible dictu*—competes with his own.

I am too much of a layman in the domain of tonal art to be allowed to express my own opinion regarding the value of Spontini's compositions, and all that I say here is no more than the echo of other voices, especially audible in the fluctuation of daily talk.

Spontini is the greatest of all living composers. He is a musical Michelangelo. He has blazed new paths in music. He has carried out

what Gluck only divined. He is a great man, he is a genius, he is a god! Thus speaks the Spontini party, and the walls of the palaces reëcho this exaggerated praise. For you must know that it is the nobility to which Spontini's music specially appeals, and which deigns to vouchsafe him distinguished marks of its favor. The actual Spontini party, which naturally is composed of a number of people who blindly do homage to aristocratic and legitimate taste; of a number of those who enthuse over the exotic; of a few composers who would like to have their music performed; and, finally, of a handful of genuine admirers, leans upon these noble patrons.

Of whom the opposing party is in part made up, it is not hard to guess. Many disapprove of the good knight because he is a Southerner. Others, because they envy him. Again others, because his music is not German. And finally, the greater part sees in his music only a rumpus of kettledrums and trumpets, sounding bombast and the stilted and unnatural. In addition there was the vexation of many. . .¹

Now, my dear fellow, you can understand the noise which filled all Berlin this summer, when Spontini's 'Olympia' first made its appearance on our boards. Were you not able to hear the music of this opera out in Hamm? There was no lack of kettledrums and bassoons, which led a would-be wit to declare that the new opera should be used to test the staying powers of the walls of the new theater. Another came out of the roar of 'Olympia,' heard the drums beat the tattoo in the street, and drawing a deep breath, exclaimed: "At last I hear some *soft* music!" All Berlin crack jokes about the numerous trumpets and the great elephant in the pompous processions of this opera. The deaf, however, were quite delighted with so much splendor, and insisted that they could feel this lovely, thick music with their hands. And the enthusiasts cried: "Hosannah! Spontini is a musical elephant himself! He is an angel of trumpets."

Shortly after Carl Maria von Weber came to Berlin, his "Freischütz" was performed in the New Theater, and delighted the public. Now the anti-Spontini party had a rallying-point, and on the evening of the first performance of his opera, Weber was fêted in the most splendid manner. In quite a fine poem, written by Dr. Förster, it is said of the "Freischütz," that "he hunts nobler game than elephants." Weber expressed himself regarding this line in the *Intelligenzblatt* the other day in a most lamentable way, cajoling Spontini and blaming poor Förster, who meant so well by him. At the time Weber cherished the hope that he might receive an appointment here at the Opera, and would not have acted with such an excessive show of modesty if all hope of remaining here had already been denied him. Weber left us after the third performance of his opera, and travelled back to Dresden, there received a splendid call to Cassel, refused it, went on conducting at the Dresden Opera, where he is compared to a good general without soldiers, as before; and has now travelled to Vienna, where a new comic opera of his is to be given. Regarding the value of the text and music of the "Freischütz," I refer you to the extended review which Professor Gubitz has written of it in the *Gesellschafter*. This keen and witty critic has the merit of

¹Here two lines have been cut by the censor. The word the *late* Weber on the preceding page, of course, was added by Heine after Weber's death in 1826.—*Transl.*

being the first who unfolded in detail the romantic beauties of this Opera, and who foretold its great triumphs in the most unequivocal manner.

Weber's appearance is not very prepossessing. He is small in stature, with a poor physical foundation, and a long-drawn face of no special distinction. Yet this face is overspread with the ingenious sobriety and calm will-power which so significantly attracts us in the faces of the old German masters. What a contrast, on the other hand, is the appearance of Spontini. A tall figure, a dark, deep-set, flaming eye, locks black as coal, which half conceal the furrowed brow, the part melancholy, part haughty line about the lips, the brooding savagery of the yellowish face, in which all the passions have raged and are still raging, the whole head, which might be that of a Calabrese, and yet must be termed handsome and noble—all at once permits us to recognize the man of whose genius "The Vestal," "Cortez" and "Olympia" were born.

Among local composers I will mention our Bernhardt Klein immediately after Spontini, who long since made himself honorably known by some fine compositions, and whose great opera "Dido" has been awaited by the entire public with longing. This Opera, according to the report of all competent judges to whom the composer has disclosed portions of it, is said to contain the most astonishing beauties, and to be a genial German national work. Klein's music is quite original. It differs altogether from the music of the two masters already mentioned, just as the gay, pleasant face of the Rhinelander, full of glad vitality, is a contrast to their faces. Klein is from Cologne, and may be regarded as the pride of his native city.

I must not pass over G. A. Schneider here. Not that I regard him as a great composer; but because, as the composer of Koreff's "Aucassin and Nicolette," he has been the topic of public discussion from February 26th to this very hour. For eight days at least nothing was spoken of except Koreff and Schneider and Schneider and Koreff. Here stood some clever amateurs and tore the music to pieces; there stood a group of poetasters and corrected the text. As for myself, this Opera afforded me extraordinary entertainment. The colorful fairytale which the skillful poet had developed in so charming a manner, and with such childlike simplicity, cheered me. I was delighted with the attractive contrast of the serious Occident and the merry Orient, and as the most astonishing pictures, loosely-knit together, passed adventurously before my eyes, the spirit of blossoming romanticism was awakened in me.¹

¹Heine's sonnet in his *Buch der Lieder* records his impressions of Schneider's opera, now forgotten.—*Transl.*

„Aucassin und Nicolette“

oder

„Die Liebe aus der guten alten Zeit“

Hast einen bunten Teppich ausgebreitet,
Worauf gestickt sind leuchtende Figuren
Es ist der Kampf feindseliger Naturen,
Der halbe Mond, der mit dem Kreuze streitet.

Trompetentusch! Die Schlacht wird vorbereitet;
Im Kerker schmachten, die sich Treue schwuren;
Schalmeien klingen auf Provencer Fluren;
Auf dem Bazar Karthagos Sultan schreitet.

There is always a tremendous amount of excitement in Berlin when a new Opera is given, and in this case there was the additional circumstance that Schneider, the musical director, and Koreff, the privy counselor and knight, are so generally known. The latter we are soon to lose, since he is preparing to take an extensive trip abroad. This will be a loss to our city, for this man stands out because of his social virtues, his agreeable personality and his breadth of mind.

In Heine's third Berlin letter (June 7, 1822), we hear more of Spontini. Heine has been describing the ceremonies in connection with the wedding of the Princess Alexandrine to the Grand-Duke of Mecklenberg-Schwerin:

The wedding festivities were not especially noisy. The morning after the marriage, the highly-placed newly-wedded pair attended service in the Domkirche. They drove in a golden coach with great glass windows, drawn by eight horses, and were admired by an immense throng. If I am not mistaken the lackeys wore no hair-bags on this particular occasion. In the evening a congratulatory court reception was held, followed by a polonaise ball in the White Hall. On the twenty-seventh there was a midday banquet in the Hall of the Knights, and in the evening the exalted and most exalted personages repaired to the Opera House, where the Opera which Spontini had expressly composed

Freundlich ergötzt die bunte Herrlichkeit:
Wir irren wie in märchenhafter Wildnis,
Bis Lieb' und Licht besiegen Hass und Nacht.

Du, Meister, kanntest der Kontraste Macht,
Und gabst in schlechter neuer Zeit das Bildnis
Von Liebe aus der guten alten Zeit!

"Aucassin and Nicolette"
or
"A Love of the Good Old Days"

To J. F. Koreff

A rug you've spread of colors variegated,
Whereon are brodered figures, radiant glowing,
The strife of two inimic natures showing,
The Crescent with the Cross in battle mated.

A blare of trumps! The battle is preparing;
Some languish chained, their vows a prison bringing;
In Provence meads the chalumeaus are singing;
The Sultan through Carthage's bazaar is faring.

A pleasant charm this motly splendor weighs,
In fairy wilderness we seem to stray
Till light and love have conquered hate and night.

You, Master, were aware of contrast's might,
You showed a picture in this poor new day
Of love as it was in the good old days.

for this festivity, "Nurmahal, or the Feast of Roses in Cashmere," was given. Most people found it very difficult to secure tickets for this performance. I was given one, and yet I did not go. It is true I should have done so in order to be able to review it for you. But do you imagine I would sacrifice myself for the sake of my correspondence? I think with horror of "Olympia," which I was lately obliged to hear once more, for a specific purpose, and which dismissed me with limbs well-nigh crushed. But I did go to the king's chamber musician, and asked him what there were to the opera. He answered: "The best thing about it is that not a shot falls in it." Yet in this connection I cannot rely upon the chamber musician; in the first place, he composes himself, and, in his own opinion, better than Spontini; and in the second place he has been led to believe that Spontini intends to write an opera with cannon *obbligato*. But in general not much that is good is said of "Nurmahal." It cannot be a masterpiece. Spontini has patched it up with numerous musical numbers from his older operas. Owing to this the opera gains some very good numbers; but as a whole it takes on a patched-together appearance, and lacks the consistency and unity which is the principal merit of Spontini's other operas. . . .

It is very quiet in the musical world. The *capitale de la musique* is just like any other *capitale*. It consumes what the provinces have produced. Aside from young Felix Mendelssohn, who in the judgment of all the musicians is a musical wonder, and may become a second Mozart, I should not be able to know where to find one other musical genius among the indwelling autochtones of Berlin. Most of the musicians who distinguish themselves here are from the provinces, or even strangers. I take quite inexpressible pleasure in being obliged to mention here, that our countryman, Joseph Klein, the composer's younger brother, of whom I spoke in my preceding letter, justifies the greatest expectations. He has written a great deal that is praised by connoisseurs. Song compositions of his which have been much applauded here, are shortly to be published, and are largely sung in society. Their melodies show surprising originality; they appeal to every mind, and we anticipate that this young artist will some day be one of Germany's most celebrated composers. Spontini is leaving us for a long time. He is travelling to Italy. He has sent his "Olympia" to Vienna, but it will not be performed there, because the expense is too great. . . .

"PICTURES OF TRAVEL"

(Italy: 1828-1829)

The Italian Opera Buffa

In the "Pictures of Travel" (Italy: 1828-29), Chapter XIX, we find a politico-musical definition of the *opera buffa*, together with an appreciation of Rossini.

It was a genuine Italian piece of music, out of some favorite *opera buffa*, that strange operatic genius which allows humor its widest range, in which humor may abandon itself to all its bounding enjoyment, its

mad sentimentalism, its laughing melancholy and its mortal enthusiasm for death which yet yearns to live. It was pure Rossini, the aria as it is most charmingly disclosed in the "Barber of Seville."

Those who despise Italian music, who also break the rod over this type of Opera, will not escape their well-deserved punishment in hell some day, and may be condemned, perhaps, to listen for all eternity to the fugues of Sebastian Bach and nothing else. I am sorry for many a colleague of mine, Rellstab, for instance, who also will not escape this form of damnation unless he becomes a Rossini convert before his death. Rossini, *divino maestro*, Helios of Italy, you who have spread your sounding rays over the entire world, forgive my countrymen who blaspheme against you on writing-paper and blotting-paper! I myself take pleasure in your golden tones, your melodious lights, your sparkling butterfly dreams, which frolic about me so delightfully, and kiss my heart as though with the lips of the Graces. *Divino maestro*, forgive my poor countrymen, who do not see your profundities because you cover them with roses, and to whom you do not appear to be sufficiently gravid with thought, nor thorough, because you flutter so lightly, on godlike wing! It is true, that in order to love the Italian music of to-day and understand it through loving it, one must actually have the Romans before one's eyes, see their sky, their character, their appearance, their joys, their sufferings, in short, their entire history, from Romulus, who founded the Holy Roman Empire, to the most recent times, when it was destroyed under Romulus Augustulus II. Poor enslaved Italy is forbidden to speak, and may only express in music the feelings of her heart! All her resentment against alien rule, her enthusiasm for liberty, her madness in view of her own feeling of impotence, her sadness at the recollection of the splendors of her past, as well as her faint hopes, her harking, her thirst for aid, all this disguises itself in those melodies which glide from a grotesquerie drunk with life to elegiac gentleness, and in those pantomimes which tip over from flattering caresses into threatening rage.

Such is the esoteric sense of the *opera buffa*. The exoteric sentinel, in whose presence it is sung and acted, never suspects the amatory adventures, amatory distresses and amatory teasings beneath which the Italian conceals his most deadly aspirations for liberty, as Harmodius and Aristogiton hid their daggers in a myrtle-wreath. That is all nonsense, says the exoteric sentinel, and it is well that he notices nothing. For if he did, the impresario as well as the *prima donna* and the *primo uomo* would soon be treading those boards known as a fortress; a commission of investigation would be instituted, all trills dangerous to the State and all revolutionary *colorature* would be heard in evidence, a number of Harlequins, bound up in the widest ramifications of criminal activities, as well as Tartaglia, Brighella, even serious old Pantaloon, would be arrested, the Dottore of Bologna's papers would be laid under seal, he would babble himself into a still greater danger as a suspect, and Columbine would have to cry her eyes red at such a family misfortune. Yet I believe that mischance of this kind will not yet overwhelm these good people; for these Italian demagogues are craftier than those poor Germans who, with similar objects in view, masqueraded in black motley, with black fool's-caps, but made such a noticeably sorry appearance, and cut such long faces and seemed so dangerous at their

profound tomfoolery, which they called 'turning,' that the governments ended by noticing them, and had to put them in jail.

THE PARIS LETTERS

(1832-1839)

Meyerbeer's "Robert le diable"

In Heine's fifth letter, on "Conditions in France" (The Bourgeoise Kingdom of 1832) from Paris (March 25, 1832), we find Meyerbeer's "Robert le diable" used as a means of political characterization.

The supporters of the ministry, that is to say the employees, bankers, owners of landed estates, and shopkeepers, increased the general unease by smiling assurances that we were all of us living in a condition of the greatest calm, that the thermometer of national prosperity, the current rate of exchange of national securities, had advanced, that we have had more balls than ever this winter in Paris, and that we have seen the Opéra in its highest state of florescence. This was actually true, for these persons, of course, have the means to give balls, and so they dance at them to show that France is prosperous; they dance for their system, for peace, for the quiescence of Europe; they want to dance up the exchange rate, to dance for a rise. True enough, there were times, during these pleasing *entrechats*, when the diplomatic corps brought in all sorts of ill tidings from Belgium, Spain, England and Italy; but no one showed any dismay, and all kept on dancing with the merriment of despair, somewhat as Aline, Queen of Golconda, continues her seemingly happy dance even though the corps of eunuchs comes squeaking up with one item of bad news after another. As before mentioned, these people dance for their incomes, and the more conservatively inclined they are, the more passionately they dance; why, the most corpulent, most moral of bankers dance the accursed waltz of the nuns from "Robert le diable," the famous opera.

Meyerbeer has attained the unattainable by succeeding in holding the attention of the volatile Parisians a whole winter long; everyone is still streaming to the *Académie de Musique*, in order to see "Robert le diable"; yet enthusiastic Meyerbeerians must forgive me when I express my belief that many are not merely drawn there by the music, but also by the political significance of the Opera. Robert the Devil, the son of a devil who was as abominable as Philippe-Égalité and a princess as pious as the daughter of Penthièvre, is influenced by the spirit of his father to evil, to the Revolution, and by the spirit of his mother to good, the old *régime*. Both these natures, which are his heritage from birth, struggle in his mind; he floats midway between two principles, is a 'middle-of-the-roader.' In vain the hellish voices of the wolf's gorge seek to draw him into the 'movement,' in vain the ghosts of the Convention, rising from their graves in the guise of Revolutionary nuns, try to seduce him; in vain Robespierre, in the shape of Mlle. Taglioni, gives him the accolade—he withstands all temptations, all seductions, he is guided by his love for a princess of both the Sicilies, who is very pious,

and he, too, grows pious, and finally we see him in the bosom of the Church, priests muttering around him, and befogged with incense. I cannot help but observe that at the first performance of this Opera, owing to a mistake on the part of the machinist, the trap-door on which old father devil descends to hell was left unfastened, and that the devil's son, when he accidentally stepped on it, also went below.

THE "FLORENTINE NIGHTS"

The "Florentine Nights," forming the first part of Heine's "Salon," appeared in the spring of 1836, in the Stuttgart *Morgenblatt* and, in French, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, before the "Salon" was issued in book-form in the early summer of 1837. Prof. Dr. Ernst Elster, in the introduction to his definitive edition of Heine's works, declares that "... out and out grandiose in the first 'Florentine Night' is his description of the effect of Paganini's violin-playing. The manner in which Heine has here transliterated the flood-tide and ebb-tide of tone in startling, magnificent fantasies, in words full of meaning, is one of the most spirited and spiritual achievements in this field; and the celebrated transcription which Richard Wagner has given of Beethoven's 'Eroica' may well have been suggested by Heine's account; yet how far even Wagner himself falls short of attaining his model."

FIRST NIGHT

... You often attend the opera now, Max, and I believe you go to see rather than to hear!

You are not mistaken, Maria, I really go to the opera in order to look at the faces of the handsome Italian women. To tell the truth, they are handsome enough even outside the theater, and the student of history might easily deduce the influence of the corporeal in the Italian people upon the fine arts from the ideality of their features. Nature in this case has taken back again from the artist the capital once loaned him, and behold! it has gained interest in a most delightful way. Nature, which once furnished the artist with models, is to-day copying the master-works which thus came into being. The feeling for beauty has permeated the entire nation, and as once the flesh reacted upon the spirit, now the spirit reacts upon the flesh. And the adoration of those beautiful Madonnas, those lovely altar-pictures, which are impressed upon the bridegroom's mind, while his bride sees some handsome saint in her passionate imaginings, is not fruitless. Owing to such elective affinities a race has here come into being which is still more beautiful than the lovely land in which it flourishes, and the sunny heavens which frame it in golden radiance. Men never interest me greatly, unless they are painted or sculptured, and I leave to you, Maria, all enthusiasm for these handsome, supple Italians, with their wild black side-whiskers, their bold, noble noses and wise, gentle eyes. It is said that the Lombards are the handsomest among men. I have never investigated the matter, it is

only the Lombard women whom I have given serious consideration, and they, as I have well observed, are really as beautiful as fame declares. Even in the Middle Ages they must have been rather handsome. Was it not said of Francis I that a rumor regarding the beauty of the Milanese women was the secret incentive for him to undertake his Italian campaign; the knightly king was undoubtedly curious to know whether his spiritual cousins, the relatives of his godparents, were as pretty as they were said to be. . . . Poor devil, he had to pay dearly for his curiosity at Pavia!

Yet how lovely these Italian women are when it is music which lights up their faces. I say 'lights up,' for the effect of music on the faces of these handsome women as I notice it at the Opera, resembles those effects of light and shade which fill us with astonishment when we observe statues at night by torchlight. Then these marble statues disclose to us with a truth that terrifies, the soul which dwells in them, and their mutely horrible secrets. In the same manner the lives of these beautiful Italians are laid bare to us when we see them at the opera; the changing melodies then awaken a series of emotions, recollections, longings and annoyances in their souls, which are momentarily expressed in the alternations of their features, in their blushes, their pallors, and even in their eyes. Those who are able to read may then gather from their lovely faces many very sweet and interesting facts, tales as remarkable as the novels of Boccaccio; sentiments as delicate as the sonnets of Petrarch; moods as adventurous as the *ottavavime* of Ariosto; at times even terrible treacheries and an exalted malice as poetic as the great Dante's *Inferno*. It is worth while, under the circumstances, to look up at the boxes. If only the men, in the meantime, would not express their enthusiasm by such a terrible racket. This all too insane noise in an Italian theatre irks on occasion. But music is the soul of these people, their life, their national cause. In other countries there are undoubtedly musicians who equal those of the greatest reputation in Italy, but there is no musical nation. Music here in Italy is not represented by individuals, but manifests itself in the whole population; music has become the nation. With us in the north it is quite different. There music has merely become a man, and is called Mozart or Meyerbeer; and above all, when we examine closely what these northern musicians offer us, we find Italian sunlight and the fragrance of oranges in it, and it belongs far more to lovely Italy, the home of music, than to our own Germany. Yes, Italy will always be the home of music, even though its great masters descend into the tomb at an early age or become mute, though Bellini die and Rossini fall silent.

It is true, remarked Maria, that Rossini maintains a very decided silence. Unless I am mistaken he has now kept silence for the last ten years.

That may be a joke of his, answered Maximilian. He wanted to show that the name of 'Swan of Pesaro' which has been given him, was quite unfitting. The swans sing at the end of their lives, but Rossini ceased singing in the middle of his life. I think he did well, and in this way showed that he really was a genius. An artist who is only talented has the urge to practice this talent to the very end of his days; he is spurred on by ambition, he feels that he is continually perfecting

himself; and he is impelled to strive for the highest. The genius, however, has already achieved the highest, he is content, despises the world and petty ambition, and goes home, to Stratford-on-Avon, like William Shakespeare, or promenades the *Boulevard des Italiens* in Paris, laughing and joking, like Rossini.¹ If the genius has a pretty good constitution, he lives along in this way for quite a time after he has furnished his master-works, or, as it is the custom to say, after he has fulfilled his mission. The belief that a genius must die young is a prejudice; I believe that the period from the thirtieth to the forty-second year has been given as the dangerous age for geniuses. How often I teased poor Bellini with it, and jokingly prophesied that he, as a genius, would soon have to die, once he had reached the dangerous age. Strange! Despite that it was all in jest, this prophecy frightened him. He called me his *jettatore*, and always made the sign of the horns. . . . He wanted so much to live: he had an almost passionate aversion to death: he would hear nothing of dying, and feared it like a child afraid to go to sleep in the dark. . . . He was a good, kind child, sometimes a little naughty, but then it was only necessary to threaten him with speedy death and he would at once grow humble, and make the sign of the *jettatore* with his two raised fingers. . . . Poor Bellini!

Then you knew him personally! Was he handsome?

He was not ugly. You see, even we men cannot answer in the affirmative when someone asks us a question of this kind about one of our own sex. He had a tall, slender figure, which moved daintily, I might almost say coquettishly; he was always perfectly turned out; with regular features, somewhat longdrawn, a faint rosy complexion, light blond hair, almost golden, arranged in thin locks; a high, very high and noble forehead; straight nose; pale blue eyes; a beautifully formed mouth; a round chin. His features were somewhat vague, lacking character, somewhat milky, and over this milky face there sometimes flitted a sweetly-sour expression of pain. This expression of pain in Bellini's face took the place of the intelligence which was missing; but it was a pain without depth; it flickered in the eyes without poesy, it darted without passion about the man's lips. The young maestro seemed to wish to express this flat, feeble anguish in his whole attitude. His hair was dressed in so effusively sorrowful a manner; his clothes fitted his delicate body so languishingly; he carried his little Spanish cane so idyllically, that he always reminded me of the youthful shepherds whom we see lolling about with ribboned staffs and bright-colored jackets and pantalets in our shepherd plays. And his walk was so virginal, so elegiac, so ethereal! The whole man looked like a sigh in dancing pumps. Women approved of him highly, but I doubt whether he awoke a strong passion in any. As far as I am concerned I always found something humorously distasteful in his appearance, whose cause was probably grounded in the way in which he spoke French. Although Bellini had already lived several years in France, he nevertheless spoke French as badly as, perhaps, it might only have been spoken in England. I should not use the word 'badly' in connection with his speech. 'Badly' is far

¹"The Swan of Pesaro," says Heine, in his *Thoughts and Fancies*, "could no longer endure the gabbling of the geese."—*Transl.*

too good. One would have to say horrible, incestuous, world-destructive! Yes, when one was at some social affair with him, and he broke the hapless French words on the wheel like a hangman, and delivered himself of his colossal *coq-à-l'ânes* with entire imperturbability, one thought at times the world would be destroyed in a crash of thunder. . . . A deathlike stillness would pervade the entire room; mortal fear was depicted on every countenance, whether chalked or vermillioned; the women did not know whether to faint or to flee; the men looked down at their knee-breeches in dismay, to assure themselves that they really had them on; and, most terrible of all, this terror was accompanied by a mortal desire to laugh, which could hardly be controlled. When one was out in company with Bellini, therefore, his vicinity of necessity always inspired a certain dread, one at once attractive and repulsive in its horrible fascination. At times his unintentional *calembours* were merely of the entertaining sort, and in their droll insipidity recalled the palace of his countryman, the Prince of Pallagonia, which Goethe, in his *Italienische Reise*, described as a museum of baroque distortions and monstrous figures coupled without rhyme or reason. Since at these times Bellini always believed that he had said something quite harmless and very serious, his face and his words formed the maddest of contrasts. All I found impossible to admire in his face was the more marked on such occasions. What I did not like was not exactly to be described as a lack of something, and least of all may it have been displeasing to the ladies. Bellini's face, like his whole appearance, had that physical freshness, that fleshy bloom, that rosy color which impressed me, whose preference is for the mortuary and the marble, unfavorably. Not until later, when I had known Bellini for a long time, did I develop a measure of liking for him. This came about when I noticed that his character was a thoroughly good and noble one. His soul surely was always pure and unsullied by all ugly contacts. Nor was he lacking in the harmless geniality, the quality of the child-like which we never find lacking in persons gifted with genius, though they may not disclose it to everyone.

Yes, I remember, Maximilian continued, as he seated himself in a chair against whose back he had hitherto been holding himself erect, I remember one moment at which Bellini appeared to me in so amiable a light that I resolved to learn to know him better. But it was, unfortunately, the last time I was to see him in this life. It was one evening after we had dined together, and grown very merry, and the sweetest melodies had sounded forth at the piano, in the home of a great lady who had the smallest foot in Paris. . . . I can still see him, poor Bellini, how at last, exhausted by the numerous mad Bellinisms which he had been babbling, he dropped into a seat. . . . This seat was very low, more like a little bench, so that at the same time Bellini came to be sitting at the feet of a lovely lady stretched out opposite him upon a sofa, who looked down on him with kindly malice, while he labored to entertain her with a few French phrases, and was constantly under the necessity of supplying a commentary in his Sicilian jargon on what he had that moment said, in order to prove that it was no absurdity but, on the contrary, a most delicate compliment. I do not believe that the lovely lady paid much attention to Bellini's talk; she had taken his little Spanish cane, to which he had recourse at times in order to support his feeble

rhetoric, from his hand; and was calmly using it to destroy the gracious structure of curls above the temples of the youthful *mæstro*. To this wanton bit of sportiveness, no doubt, was due the smile which lent her face an expression such as I had never yet seen upon a living human countenance. Never will that face fade from my memory! It was one of those faces which appear to belong to the dream-land of poesy rather than the crude realities of life; contours which recalled Da Vinci, the noble oval with the naïve dimples in the cheeks, and the chin, sentimental, and coming to a point, of the Lombard school. Its coloring was more softly Roman, of a dull pearly lustre, a distinguished pallor, a morbidezza. In short, it was a face such as is to be found only in an old Italian portrait, representing some one of those great ladies with whom the Italian artists of the sixteenth century were in love when they created their masterpieces, whom the poets of the time had in mind when they sang their deathless songs, for whom the warrior heroes of Germany and France yearned when they girded their swords and plunged over the Alps, avid for doughty deeds. . . . Yes, yes, it was a face of this kind, over which played a smile of the tenderest mischief and the most aristocratic sportiveness, while she, this beautiful lady, destroyed poor Bellini's structure of blonde curls with the Spanish cane. At that moment Bellini appeared to me as though touched by a little magic wand, as though metamorphosed into an entirely unknown personality, and suddenly my heart felt a kinship for him. His face shone in the reflection of that smile. It was, perhaps, his life's supremest moment of bloom. . . . I shall never forget him. . . . Fourteen days later I read in the papers that Italy had lost one of her most illustrious sons.

Strange! At the same time the death of Paganini was also announced. This death-notice I never for a moment questioned, for old, livid Paganini always looked as though he were dying; yet the death of Bellini, young and rosy, seemed incredible to me. And yet the report of the former's death was merely a newspaper error, Paganini is living, fresh and hearty, in Genoa; and Bellini lies in his grave in Paris.

Are you fond of Paganini? asked Maria.

That man, answered Maximilian, is an ornament to his fatherland, and surely deserves the most distinguished mention when one wishes to discuss the musical notabilities of Italy.

I have never seen him, remarked Maria, but rumor has it that his outward appearance does not entirely satisfy the sense of the beautiful. I have seen portraits of him. . . .

None of which resemble him, Maximilian interjected. They make him homelier or better-looking, but none of them show his true character. I think that only one person has been successful in putting down Paganini's true physiognomy on paper; it is a deaf painter by the name of Lyser, who in his spirited madness has limned Paganini's head so admirably with a few strokes of chalk, that the verity of his drawing rouses laughter and terror at the same time. 'The devil guided my hand,' the deaf painter told me, chuckling mysteriously, and nodding his head with good-natured irony, as was his wont regarding his clever buffooneries. This painter was always a queer customer; in spite of his deafness he had an enthusiastic love for music, and is said to have been able, when close enough to the orchestra, to read the music from the

musicians' faces and to judge as to their more or less successful performance of it by the movements of their fingers. He also wrote the critical reviews of the Opéra for an esteemed Hamburg journal. What is there really astonishing about it? The deaf painter could see the tones in the visible signature of their playing. Are there not persons to whom the tones themselves are only invisible signatures, wherein they hear colors and figures?

You are a man of that sort, cried Maria.

I regret that I no longer possess Lyser's little drawing; it would, perhaps, give you an idea of what Paganini looked like. Only in harsh, black, fleeting lines could those fabled features, which appear to belong to the sulphureous realm of shadows rather than to the sunny world of life, be realized. 'For a fact, the devil guided my hand,' the deaf painter assured me, when we stood in the Alster-Pavilion in Hamburg, on the day when Paganini gave his first concert there. 'Yes, my friend,' he continued, 'what the whole world declares, that he sold himself to the devil, body and soul, in order to become the best of violinists, to fiddle together millions, and, first of all, to escape from the damned galley where he had already languished for so many years, is true. For, look you, my friend, when he was conductor in Lucca, he fell in love with some princess of the theatre; became jealous of some little *abbate*; was, perhaps, *cocu*, and stabbed his faithless *amata* to death in good Italian style; was sent to the galleys in Genoa, and, as I have mentioned, finally sold himself to the devil in order to get away, to become the greatest of violinists and to be able to extort a levy of two thalers from each one of us here this evening. . . . But, look! All good spirits praise the Lord! See, there he comes, up the alley, together with his dubious familiar!'

In fact, it was Paganini himself whom I saw a moment later. He wore a dark-grey overcoat which reached to his feet, and which made him appear very tall. His long black hair fell down upon his shoulders in disordered locks, and formed a dark frame for the pale, cadaverous face, upon which sorrow, genius and hell had graven their unmistakeable signs. Beside him walked with mincing steps a low, comfortable figure, comically prosaic, with a rosy, wrinkled face, in a little, light-grey overcoat with steel buttons, delivering greetings on all sides with insupportable friendliness; at times, however, squinting up at the sombre figure walking seriously and meditatively beside him with timid concern. One seemed to be regarding Retzsch's picture, which shows Faust walking with Wagner before the gates of Leipsic. The deaf painter, however, commented to me on the two figures in his mad way, and called my attention in particular to Paganini's broad, measured tread. 'Does it not seem as though he were still carrying the iron cross-bar between his legs? He has accustomed himself to this manner of walking once and for all. See with what contemptuous irony he looks down on his companion at times, when the latter annoys him with his prosaic questions. Yet he cannot do without him; a sanguinary contract binds him to this servant, who in reality is none other than Satan. Ignorant people, it is true, believe that his companion is Harrys, a writer of comedies and anecdotes, from Hanover, whom Paganini carries with him on his travels so that he may attend to the financial details of his concerts. But the people do not know that the devil has merely borrowed Mr. George Harrys'

form, and that the poor fellow's wretched soul in the meantime has been locked up together with other trash in a chest in Hanover, until the devil give it back its fleshly envelope, and he may accompany Maestro Paganini on his journey through the world in more seemly guise, that is to say, in the shape of a black poodle!

But if Paganini had already seemed to me quite sufficiently a creature of fable and a figure of adventure when I saw him in the noonday sun under the green trees of the Hamburg *Jungfernstieg*; how greatly his horribly bizarre appearance must have astonished me on the evening of the concert. The Hamburg *Comödienhaus* was the scene of the concert, and the art-loving public had appeared so early and in such numbers that it was with difficulty that I was able to fight myself into possession of a small place near the orchestra. Although it was a mail-day, the whole cultivated world of trade was to be seen in the front boxes, an entire Olympus of bankers and other millionaires, the gods of coffee and sugar, together with their fat better halves, Junos from the *Wandrahm* and Aphrodites of the *Dreckwall*. A religious silence hung over the entire hall. Every eye was fixed on the stage. Every ear was pricked to listen. My neighbor, an old fur-broker, took the dirty cotton batting out of his ears, in order to be better able to drink in the expensive tones, which had cost two thalers entrance money. At last a dark figure appeared on the stage, one which seemed to have risen from the nether world. It was Paganini in his black evening dress. His black frock-coat and black waistcoat were of a horrible cut, such as hellish etiquette might have prescribed for the court of Prosperpine; his black trousers wobbled timidly about his legs. His long arms appeared to be still longer, as he held his violin in one hand and his bow in the other, hanging down and almost touching the ground; while he delivered himself of his unbelievable bows to the public. Something horribly wooden was observable in the pointed angular curves of his body, and something at the same time foolishly animal, so that his bowing and scraping gave rise to a curious desire to laugh; yet his face, to which the glaring footlights lent a still more cadaverously white appearance, had a quality so imploring, such an imbecile humility, that a shuddering pity suppressed our inclination to laughter. Did he learn these courtesies from an automaton or from a dog? Is his imploring glance that of a man sick unto death, or is the mockery of a miser lurking behind it? Is he a living man, in the act of dying, who has to amuse the public in the arena of art with his contortions, like a perishing gladiator? Or is he a dead man risen from the grave, a vampire with a violin, who, if he does not suck the blood from our hearts, at any rate sucks the money out of our pocketbooks?

Such were the questions which passed through my mind while Paganini was paying his endless compliments; yet all such questions were immediately silenced when the wonderful master put his violin to his chin and began to play. As far as I am concerned, you know my musical second sight, my gift of seeing the corresponding tonal figure of every tone I hear played. It was thus that Paganini, with every stroke of his bow, called up visible figures and situations before my eyes, that he recounted to me in his sounding picture-writing all sorts of vivid stories, that he conjured up for me a species of colorful shadow-play, in which

he himself, with his violin playing, always acted as the leading character. Already, at his first bow-stroke, the wings about him had changed: he now suddenly stood with his music-stand in a cheerful room, which was decorated in an amusingly disordered manner with scrolled furniture à la *Pompadour*: round about were little mirrors, gilded Cupids, Chinese porcelain, a most delightful chaos of ribbons, wreaths of flowers, white kid gloves, torn lace, imitation pearls, gilt diadems, and other divine tinsel such as one is wont to find in the studio of a *prima donna*. Paganini's outward appearance had changed, and very much for the better. He wore short knee-breeches of lilac-colored satin, a white waistcoat embroidered in silver, a coat of bright blue velvet with buttons covered with gold thread, and his hair, carefully curled in tiny locks, played about his face, quite youthful and blooming, and aglow with sweet tenderness when he cast sheep's eyes at the pretty little lady who stood beside him at the music-stand while he played the violin.

In fact, I discovered beside him a young, pretty creature, in old-fashioned attire, her white satin dress puffed out below the hips, her waist all the more charmingly narrow, her powdered hair arranged in a high *coiffure*, allowing the round, attractive face to gleam out all the more freely with its flashing eyes, its rouged cheeks, its beauty plasters and impertinent little nose. In her hand she held a roll of white paper, and to judge by the movement of her lips as well as the coquettish swaying to and fro of the upper part of her body, she seemed to be singing. But not a single one of her trills could I hear, and only from the music of the violin, upon which young Paganini accompanied this lovely young thing, could I guess what she was singing, and what emotions possessed his own soul while he played. Ah, they were melodies such as the nightingale flutes in the dusk of evening, when the fragrance of the rose intoxicates her prescient springtide heart with longing! Ah, what melting, sensuously languishing bliss! They were tones which kissed, then fled each other poutingly, and finally embraced once more and became one, and died away in an intoxicated merging. Yes, the tones played a merry game, like butterflies, when one teasingly avoids the other, hides behind a flower, is finally caught, and then, thoughtlessly happy, flutters up into the golden sunshine with its companion. But a spider, a spider, on occasion, may prepare a tragic fate for such a butterfly in love! Did his young heart suspect it? A plaintive sighing tone, like the anticipation of an approaching misfortune, softly glided through the most enchanting melodies radiating from Paganini's violin. . . . His eyes grow moist. . . . He kneels to his *amada* in adoration. . . . But, alas, as he kneels to kiss her feet, he spies a little *abbate* beneath her bed. I do not know what he might have had against the poor man, but the Genoese grew pale as death; he seized the little fellow with furious hands, boxed his ears and kicked him as well a number of times, then threw him out of the door, and finally drawing a long stiletto, thrust it into the young beauty's breast! . . .

At this moment cries of *Bravo! Bravo!* resounded on every side. Hamburg's enthusiastic men and women did homage with the most tumultuous applause to the great artist, who had just finished the first part of his concert, and who bowed with even more angles and curvatures than before. And it seemed to me that in his face there whimpered a

still more imploring humility than had formerly been the case. His eyes were fixed in grisly fear, like those of some poor sinner.

'Divine!' cried my neighbor, the fur-broker, as he scratched his ears. 'That piece in itself was worth two thalers!'

When Paganini once more began to play, it grew dark before my eyes. The tones did not shape themselves into bright forms and colors; on the contrary, the figure of the master concealed itself in sinister shadows, out of whose darkness his music wailed forth in tones of the most biting lamentation. Only at times, when a small lamp hanging above him showed him in its wretched ray, did I see his pallid countenance, in which youth had not as yet, however, altogether died. He wore a strange garb, split into two colors, one yellow, the other red. His feet were laden with heavy chains. Behind him moved a figure whose face seemed to point to a merry Pandean nature, and I could occasionally see the long, hairy hands which seemed to belong to this figure dart helpfully among the strings of the violin on which Paganini was playing. At times they also guided the hand in which he held the bow, and a bleaty laugh of approval then accompanied the tones which oozed out, ever more agonizingly and more bleedingly, from the violin. These were tones like the song of the fallen angels who took them wives of the daughters of men, and who, cast out of the empire of the blessed, descended to the nether world with faces aglow with shame. These were tones in whose bottomless abysses there glimmered neither consolation nor hope. When the saints in heaven hear tones such as these, the praise of God dies away on their paling lips, and weeping, they veil their goodly heads. At times, when the *obbligato* caprid laughter rang bleatingly amid the melodic agonies of this playing, I could see a number of small female figures in the background, who nodded their ugly heads with malicious merriment, and 'fie'd for shame' with a dumb play of fingers in taunting rejoicing. Then cries of fear would sound from the violin, and a distressing sighing and sobbing, such as earth had never heard before, and such as earth, perhaps, shall never hear again, unless it be when the colossal trumps of the Last Day resound in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and the naked bodies crawl forth from their graves to await judgment. . . . But the tortured violinist suddenly gave a stroke, so mad and despairing a stroke, that his chains burst rattling asunder, and his sinister assistant, together with the taunting monsters, disappeared.

At that moment my neighbor, the fur-coat broker said: 'What a pity! He snapped a string. That's what comes from the everlasting *pizzicato*!'

Had one of his violin-strings really snapped? I do not know. I only noticed the transfiguration of the tones, and then Paganini and his surroundings were once more altogether transformed. Him I could hardly recognize again in the brown monk's cowl, which hid rather than clothed him. His neglected face half-concealed by the hood, a rope around his waist, bare-foot, a lonely, defiant figure, Paganini stood on a rocky projection by the sea playing his violin. It was, so it seemed to me, at twilight, the roseglow of evening covered the broad surface of the ocean, which grew ruddier and ruddier in color, and murmured with ever increasing solemnity, in most mysterious concord with the tones of the violin. Yet the ruddier the sea became, the paler grew the

heavens, and when finally the billowing water seemed to be one glaring scarlet sea of blood, the skies above had turned spectrally bright, corpse-white, and the stars stood forth in them, large and threateningly. . . . and these stars were black, black as shining anthracite coal! But the tones of the violin grew more tempestuous and bold, and in the eyes of the terrible minstrel there sparkled so mocking a lust of destruction, and his thin lips moved with such grisly haste, that it seemed as if he were muttering accursed primal formulas of magic, with which one calls up the storm and releases the evil spirits who lie captive in the abysses of the sea. Sometimes, stretching his naked arm out of the broad sleeve of his monkish garb, in all its lean length, and sweeping the air with his bow, he seemed all the more a warlock, commanding the elements with his magic wand; and an insane howling seemed to be loosed in the depths of the sea, and the horrified waves of blood bounded to such tremendous heights that they almost splashed the pallid vault of heaven and its black stars with their sanguine foam. There was a screeching and a crashing as though the world were crumbling into ruin, and the monk played his violin all the more remorselessly. He wished to break the seven seals with which Solomon sealed the iron vessels, after he had imprisoned the conquered demons in them, by the power of his raging will. Those vessels the wise king had sunk in the sea, and it was the very voices of those imprisoned demons which I thought I heard while Paganini's violin was pealing out its furious bass tones. But finally I seemed to hear something like the joy of liberation, and I saw the heads of the demons whose chains had been riven from them emerge out of the sea of blood-red waves: monsters of fabulous ugliness, crocodiles with bat wings, serpents with stag's antlers, apes capped with funicular shells, seals with long patriarchal beards, female faces with breasts in place of cheeks, green camel-heads, androgynous beings of inconceivable composition, all glowering with coldly intelligent eyes, and reaching out toward the fiddling monk with long, finned paws. . . . He, however, stood, and in the raging zeal of his invocation his hood fell back, and the locks of his hair, fluttering in the wind, writhed about his head like black serpents.

This apparition so confused my senses that, in order not to go mad, I held my hands to my ears and closed my eyes. Then the spectral vision disappeared, and when I once more looked up I saw the poor Genoese in his usual shape, cutting his customary complimentary contortions, while the public applauded most delightfully.

'So that is his famous playing on the G string!' observed my neighbor. 'I play the violin myself, and know what it means to have so thoroughly mastered the instrument.'

Fortunately the intermission was not a long one, or the musical fur-broker certainly would have entangled me in a long discussion on art. Paganini once more quietly rested his violin against his chin, and with the first stroke of his bow the magic transfiguration of tones once more began. But now they no longer took on so strongly colored and corporeal a shape. These tones unfolded themselves calmly, with a majestic flow and swell, like an organ chorale in a minster, and everything around them extended itself further and further in breadth and in height to a colossal space, such as the finite eye might not grasp, but the

eye of the spirit alone. In the midst of this space floated a radiant globe, and on it, gigantic and proudly upraised, stood a man playing the violin. Was this orb the sun? I do not know. But I recognized Paganini in the lineaments of the man; yet idealized in beauty, divinely clarified, reconciliation in his smile. His body bloomed in all the strength of manhood, a garment of clear blue confined his ennobled limbs, his black hair flowed upon his shoulders in shining curls; and as he stood there, firm and steadfast, like some exalted divinity and played his violin, it seemed as though all creation obeyed his tones. He was the man-planet around whom moved the universe, with due solemnity and sounding forth the rhythms of bliss. Those great lights, floating about him in so calm a radiance, were they the stars of heaven? and those echoing harmonies born of their movement, was this the music of the spheres of which poets and prophets have told so many enchanting tales? At times, when I strained my eyes far out into the twilight distance, I seemed to behold nothing but white, flowing garments, in which giant pilgrims were wandering about in disguise, with white staves in their hands, and, strange to say, the golden knobs which tipped them were the same great lights which I had thought were stars. The pilgrims progressed around the great fiddler in a wide circle, and the tones of his violin caused the golden knobs of their staves to gleam with ever increasing radiance, and the chorales which rose from their lips, and which I had thought were the music of the spheres, were really no more than the dying echo of the tones of his violin. A sacred and nameless fervor dwelt in those tones, which at times trembled forth, hardly audible, like a mysterious whisper upon the waters, and then welled up again gruesomely sweet, like the sound of hunting horns in the moonlight; and finally rushed along in unchecked jubilation, as though a thousand bards were sweeping their harp-strings and raising their voices in a chant of triumph. They were sounds which the ear never hears, but only the heart may dream, when it rests at night against the heart of the beloved. Perhaps, too, the heart understands them in bright daylight, when it steepes itself with an outcry of joy in the lines of beauty and the ovals of a Grecian work of art. . . .

SECOND NIGHT

This short excerpt, the only musical one contained in the "Second Florentine Night," describes a *soirée* in Paris, at which Liszt plays:

It was at a *soirée* in the Chaussée d'Antin . . . a radiant *soirée*, and none of the traditional ingredients of social pleasure were missing: there was enough light to illuminate one; a sufficiency of mirrors to permit one to view one's self; enough people to crowd one's self warm; and enough sugar-water and ice to cool one's self off. They commenced with music. Franz Liszt allowed himself to be driven to the piano, stroked back the hair from his genial brow, and delivered one of his most brilliant battles. The keys seemed to bleed. Unless I am mistaken, he played a passage from the palingenesis of Ballanche, whose ideas he translated into music, which was very useful to those who are unable to read the

famous author's works in the original. Afterward he played the "Processional to the Execution," *la marche au supplice*, by Berlioz, that admirable composition which this young master, unless I am mistaken, composed on the morning of his wedding-day. The whole room was filled with paling faces, heaving bosoms, faint breathing between the pauses and, finally, tumultuous applause. The women always act as though intoxicated when Liszt has played something for them. With madder joy they now abandoned themselves to the dance, these Willis of the *salon*, and it was with difficulty that I managed to make my escape into an adjoining room.

(*To be continued*)

(*Translated by Frederick H. Martens*)